

VZCZCXRO0759
RR RUEHMA RUEHPA
DE RUEHNM #0235 0961614
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 061614Z APR 09
FM AMEMBASSY NIAMEY
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4948
INFO RUEHAS/AMEMBASSY ALGIERS 3503
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0809
RUEHTRO/AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE
RHMFSS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC

UNCLAS NIAMEY 000235

DEPT FOR AF/W, AF/RSA, AND DRL/EA
ACCRA ALSO FOR AF/WA
PARIS FOR AFRICA WATCHER
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/W

SIPDIS
SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [SOCI](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [PINS](#) [PTER](#) [NG](#)
SUBJECT: GON DELEGATION PARTICIPATES IN PEACE TALKS WITH TUAREGS IN TRIPOLI

Ref: a) Niamey 00165, b) Niamey 00109

¶1. (SBU) Despite long-held refusals to negotiate with rebel Tuareg groups, including most notably the Mouvement Nigerien pour la Justice - MNJ, the Government of Niger (GON) recently sent a high-level delegation to engage in talks in Tripoli, with the first sessions of talks taking place on April 4. The Nigerien delegation includes Minister of State for the Interior Albade Abouba, High Commissioner for the Restoration of Peace Mohammed Anacko, the Governor of Agadez region, senior military leaders, and civil society representatives. Rebel groups participating include the MNJ as well as the Niger Patriotic Front (FPN) and the Front for Recovery Forces (FFR). The Libyan Ambassador to Niger, Souleymane Ahmed Mohamed Moussa, reportedly is mediating the talks.

¶2. (SBU) The talks are taking place soon after the recent offer by the "Front of Friends of Niger" to lay down weapons following a request from Qadhafi. Preliminary demands apparently include a general amnesty for rebels, the release of detainees, and the lifting of the state of emergency for the north.

¶3. (SBU) Comment: The past six weeks has seen the visit of Libyan President/AU Chairman Qadhafi to Niamey, with six Nigerien hostages returned (Ref A), and a Peace and Security Forum (Ref B) designed to address underlying causes of conflict in Niger's north, where sporadic hostilities have occurred since February 2007. It appears that the GON is willing to accept the MNJ's gestures - releasing the hostages and offering to lay down arms - as necessary and sufficient grounds to commence negotiations. End comment.

¶4. (U) Minimize considered.

Whitaker